



Love Your Pet, Love Their Teeth And Gums



You may brush your own sweet tooth after a Valentine's Day treat, but how about your pet's? Eighty percent of people brush their teeth twice a day, but their pets' teeth get far less attention, says the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

Proper dental hygiene is as important for pets as it is for their owners. By not brushing their teeth, pets can face serious risks from periodontal disease. Year after year, the AVMA reports that periodontal disease is consistently the number one diagnosed health issue in dogs and cats over three years of age. In fact, studies show 85% of pets seen by veterinarians have some form of dental disease. Good dental hygiene can ensure pets live longer, healthier lives which makes keeping their teeth clean a top priority.

"Periodontal disease is extremely common among dogs and cats. Left untreated, it can lead to bacterial infections that can spread elsewhere in the body," says Dr. Jennifer Mlekoday, DVM, West Chelsea Vet's Co-Chief of Staff. "Not to mention that it can cause pets to have significant oral discomfort, as well as really bad breath!"

What You Should Know About Poor Dental Hygiene

The worse the dental hygiene, the better chance your dog or cat could develop more serious issues like diseases of the heart, liver and kidneys. The problem starts when plaque and tartar builds up on the teeth and gums, which can in turn lead

to bacteria entering a pet's bloodstream. This bacteria can infect major organs. The longer the problems linger, the larger the amount of damage their organs can sustain. The damage can be significant leaving some pets seriously ill.

"Because periodontal disease is so common in pets, it's important for pet parents to take steps at home to make sure their dogs' and cats' teeth are as clean as possible. Good oral hygiene will prolong life and quality of life," Dr. Mlekoday said.

A Look Inside Veterinary Dental Cleanings

Dental cleanings done at your veterinarian's office are one of the most effective ways to achieve optimal dental health for your pet. During a dental treatment, your pet's teeth will be scaled, cleaned and polished, and any diseased teeth can be treated or removed. No matter how well-mannered your pet is, it would be unfair to expect them to hold their mouth open and remain perfectly still for the length of time it takes to complete a dental cleaning. Therefore, a veterinary dental cleaning almost always involves general anesthesia, for both cats and dogs. A thorough dental cleaning can ensure that your pets are healthier, with cleaner, more comfortable mouths. Whether or not your pet is in need of a dental cleaning, can be assessed by your veterinarian the next time



February is National Pet Dental Health Month!

you are in a for a visit. We strongly recommend brushing between cleanings and will discuss in detail the best ways to go about brushing your pets' teeth in an upcoming newsletter.

"In addition to brushing, there are treats, toys and foods that can assist in keeping your pet's breath smelling better and their teeth clean. At your pet's next visit, be sure to have your veterinarian recommend those that are best for your pets," explains Dr. Mlekoday.



PERIODONTAL DISEASE

Periodontal disease is an infection in the gums and can be quite painful. Experts say up to 85% of dogs and cats have some form of periodontal disease by the time they're three. As we've mentioned, dental disease can lead to infection and serious health issues affecting the kidney, heart and liver if left untreated.

Signs of Periodontal Disease:

- Red, Swollen, Tender Gums
- Gum Bleeding
- Bad Breath
- Yellowish Crust Along Gum Line
- Change in Eating or Chewing Habits



NEWS + EVENTS



Two Top-Notch Vet Techs Officially Make Pets' Dental Health Their Passion

West Chelsea Veterinary is proud to announce that two of our senior, Licensed Veterinary Technicians, Aileen Avalos, L.V.T./Team Leader/Supervisor and Candace Jones, L.V.T., have been accepted into and will be pursuing a dental specialty credential with the Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians (AVDT). This prestigious (and very rigorous) two-year program will allow Aileen and Candace to receive advanced

certification in dentistry, which serves as a specialty within the field of veterinary technology.

The program at the AVDT boasts approval by the Committee for Veterinary Technician Specialties of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians of America. To be accepted into this academy, vet techs like Aileen and Candace, must have a minimum of 6,000 hours as a credentialed technician with--3,000 of those hours having been spent in dentistry.

Congratulations, Aileen and Candace on this distinguished honor! No doubt, our patients here at West Chelsea Vet will benefit greatly from your hard work, commitment and advanced credentials.

